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THE TRENCH GETS A NIGHTLIFE

The iconic jacket comes out from the rain and into the evening spotlight



COAT OF CHARMS
Diamond Slice Earrings, price upon request; Monique P&M Atelier, 646-657-0704; Taffeta Trench, \$4,995; Laminé, New York, 646-439-0380; Jil Sander Wide-Leg Pants, \$2,175, and T-Shirt, \$245; Barneys New York, 212-674-8900; Drape Patent Sirena, \$855; seppforrest.com.

Photo: Michael O'Connell/Red Bull Content Agency; Photo: Stephen Vanhousen

Jessica Cragg-Martin for The Wall Street Journal

IN 1914, THOMAS BURBERRY WAS commissioned by the British War Office to create a jacket for its trench-fighting soldiers. Burberry added a few warfare-ready bells and whistles to his existing "Tielocken" style—made from gabardine, the company's own waterproofed worsted cotton creation—and so the "trench" coat was born. Since its sobering, utilitarian beginnings the iconic slicker has had a few insanely glamorous moments—who can forget a rain-drenched Holly Golightly chasing after "Cat" in beige Burberry, or Kim Basinger's long silky version in Adrian Lyne's steamy "9½ Weeks"—but never one quite like this. For spring, designers recast the masculine rainy-day classic in delicate fabrics made to accompany even the most ornate of evening gowns. Phillip Lim stitched one in porcelain-colored organza embroidered with tiny twisted threads that stand on end like pre-party goosebumps, and Thakoon Panichgaj crafted a midnight-blue eyelet piece with fluttering panels of silk organza. Laminé, Albee Hilsz, took a lavish yet unstructured approach with his wilted washed-taffeta version, while Ralph Lauren went old Hollywood with a luminous silver trench in double-faced charmeuse silk. These clever cover-ups are a cool alternative to wearing a pashmina or your lint-y work coat with a full-length gown this spring. And although these light-as-air beauties may have come a long way from their warring roots, think of them as winning armor in your fight to be belle of the ball.

—Alexa Braxton

FOR MORE EVENING TRENCHES, TURN TO D2

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COOKING

Meals That Cook Themselves

With a slow cooker, succulent soups and braises are simple chop-and-drop ops **D3**

HORSING AROUND IN MEXICO
An unassuming polo club near Puerto Vallarta may be the best-kept secret in the sport **D9**

WELCOME BACK, CARPET
A return to wall-to-wall graphic patterns is afoot (or, rather, underfoot) **D7**

ALL HAIL ... ANALOG?

When it comes to the quality of photos and music, the digital revolution may be failing us

BY FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

ON DEC. 30, Dwayne's Photo in Parsons, Kan., closed down and the world passed an important if little-heralded milestone: the end of Kodachrome, a beautifully saturated color transparency film that was immortalized by Paul Simon in his 1973 song ("Mama don't take my Kodachrome away"). Kodak had long since ceased its manufacture and the lab shutdown was yet another stage in the slow death of chemical, film-based photography.



Visual and audio reproduction have undergone massive changes as their underlying technologies shifted from analog to digital over the past two decades. It's clear that it is far more convenient to snap photos with a digital point-and-shoot or listen to music on an iPod. But whether the quality of images or mu-

sic has improved is, however, a highly debatable proposition, one that is contested by legions of enthusiasts who have continued to cling to older technologies not out of Luddite resistance to change, but because they believe the shift to 1's and 0's is actually making things worse. Photography and music have been hobbies of mine ever since I was a child when I built Dynakit and had my own darkroom. I was introduced to high-end audio by the political theorist Allan Bloom, who back in the early 1980s had what seemed to me a crazily expensive Linn Sondek turntable and a collection of over 2,000 records. I started collecting historical films when I inherited an FEA from my father, and these days I seem to spend as much time thinking about gear as I do analyzing politics for my day job. Let's begin with how photography has changed. Ansel Adams's iconic *Pineau* turns to page D12

Photo: Michael O'Connell/Red Bull Content Agency; Photo: Stephen Vanhousen

BRING IT BACK

NOT YOUR GRANDMA'S PATTERNED CARPET

It's time to reconsider graphic wall-to-wall

BY RITA KONIG

IT'S A BOLD MOVE to lay a patterned carpet, but if you choose the right one, such as a modern leopard print or a strong geometric, you won't regret it.

I used to think that carpet should disappear into its surroundings, and I was as into the oatmeal Brussels weave as anyone. But not anymore. I have been going through the exhausting and aesthetically emotional process of looking for a new apartment. Walking into a grot hole (you know: grubby carpets, thin curtains and badly carved-up rooms). I get very excited and see potential everywhere, but when shown the beige-carpeted, cream-walled, taste-free apartments that are supposed to be so easy to envisage yourself living in, I stumble for ideas.

So while trying to reconceive the beige boxes that have been on view, I have been thinking of stylish early-20th-century Parisian apartments, in particular those of legendary interior designers Madeleine Castaing and Elsie de Wolfe, with their leopard-print carpets, paneled walls, ornate wallpapers and big potted palms. De Wolfe and Castaing

were not afraid of pattern at all, and they used leopard quite effortlessly.

Even today, the chic French put pattern on the floor and cover the walls with fabric. They are so much more courageous than we are, especially regarding small spaces. Generally speaking, I think we shy away from such bold moves for two reasons: first, we worry that it will be overpowering, and second, that we will tire of it. So out comes the beige—as if there's no chance of tiring of something that starts out boring! Small spaces are excellent places to begin experimenting with pattern. Pattern gives the illusion of space and, furthermore, how wrong can you go in a small room? A little something extravagant on the floor can turn a tiny space into a fabulous jewel box. And with less territory to cover, you can experiment with expensive carpet without going broke.

The rule of thumb with any inspiration taken from a previous generation is that you have to update it and make it your own. While in the 1980s it was fashionable to layer pattern upon pattern (think of those Park Avenue drawing rooms with chintz and leopard),

we now do things in a much lighter way. Our rooms today tend to be brighter and airier. One of the great things about putting down an assertive carpet is that you hardly have to do anything else. The rest of the room can be calm, with pockets of color and possibly a few other patterns.

In the 1960s and '70s, interior designer David Hicks often used bold geometrics. Depending on the scale of the design they had very different impacts: A tight pattern in tonal colors gave a similar impression to a solid and worked rather like a texture, whereas his more open designs (like the one shown below right) had a lightening effect on a room. Personally I love the square-in-square design for this exact reason.

Patterned carpets are an opportunity to introduce color and give a punch of style and originality. Robert Kime does a very smart small checkerboard carpet that is wonderful for staircases and corridors. Braquerie offers a carpet with butterflies scattered across it, which is so charming and will bring some whimsy to any dull secondary room. Pattern underfoot is also practical—it's terribly forgiving as far as staining and general grub are concerned, and it adds more depth to a room than a solid color would.

Leopard-print carpets are a genius way to bring some glamour to a room, and they are also great on staircases. There are so many varieties of leopard, from very chic to shockingly bad. Braquerie does one of the best and lets you custom color your order. It is very pretty to turn it into a fantasy snow leopard by using pale creams and beiges and adding a little aqua blue, for example. Another option is Vanderhurd, where you can choose from plush pile or sheared, a process in which they take a razor blade to the material to give it a lovely worn look.

Braquerie was established in the 1800s, and the breadth of the company archive is astonishing, from Victorian acanthus-leaf carpets that one associates with grand hotels to geometrics and more modern designs. What is great fun with a company like this is to consider one of the older, more traditional patterns in custom colors that make it both unique and as current.

There are two new ikat-style carpets that I am longing to use: one, from HB Home, comes in hot pink



FANCY FOOTWORK

Above: 'Carrelage Castaing,' a carpet pattern created by Madeleine Castaing, animates this Parisian dining room designed by Jacques Grange.

Right: In 1975, designer David Hicks used his hexagonal DH Londonderry carpet in a living room scheme for a client.



and chocolate and would lay the foundations for the most wonderful bedroom; the other is Topkapi, from Charlotte Moss's Passport collection for Stark Carpets. The colorways are sensational. These can be laid as wall-to-wall carpet or as area rugs. I think that it is worth considering something in between, particularly in a rented apartment. If you are living somewhere with wooden floors, especially ones that tend toward the orange, have a carpet cut and sewn into an area rug.

Order it sized 8 to 10 inches smaller than the room's perimeter. It will make an astonishing difference to the room, particularly because it can make a temporary-feeling space seem instantly more permanent.

And when you leave, you can simply roll it up and take it with you to transform the next challenging space.

Ms. Konig is a decorator and journalist in New York.



1. 'Thread Bare Leopard,' vanderhurd.com
2. 'Istanbul' from the Charlotte Moss Passport Collection for Stark Carpet, starkcarpet.com
3. Ikat Rug in Pink and Chocolate, from the Java Collection available through HD Home, hbhomedesign.com
4. Braquerie's 'Envolée,' pierrefrey.com
5. 'Tanglers Tile' in Steel Blue by Kelly Wearstler for Patterson, Flynn & Martin, pattersonyoummartin.com